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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5474
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE
RHHMUNA/CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 000683

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/01/2012
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [RP](#)
SUBJECT: HELPING THE PHILIPPINES COMBAT UNLAWFUL KILLINGS

REF: A. MANILA 0645

[1](#)B. MANILA 609

Classified By: Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (U) In a letter to Ambassador dated February 28, Foreign Secretary Alberto G. Romulo expressed "sincerest appreciation

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of the Philippine Government and people for your words of support and encouragement for our efforts to address the issue of unexplained killings," and welcomed an offer of additional USG support on this issue, "consistent with, and complementary to, our joint efforts at solidifying our special partnership for peace and prosperity."

[1](#)2. (C) In separate conversations with Secretary Romulo, Defense Secretary Ebdane, and Executive Secretary Ermita on March 1, Ambassador reiterated the concern of the USG and the international community over the unlawful killings of leftists, journalists, and others, and welcomed the additional steps the Philippine government had taken to combat this problem (ref b). She underscored that long-standing USG support for institutional reform within the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine National Police, as well as in the judiciary, were directly relevant to and important for greater success in resolving these killings, along with the human rights training provided for Philippine security forces in country, at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Bangkok, and at U.S. military and FBI training academies. She promised that we would look for additional ways to be helpful and would confer at greater length with Executive Secretary Ermita on March 2.

[1](#)3. (C) In a separate briefing on "unexplained killings" at the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency chaired by National Security Advisor Norberto Gonzalez on March 1 and attended also by Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Seguis, NICA Chairman General Garcia, senior staff of the National Security Council and NICA, as well as Ambassadors or senior representatives of six countries, Pol/C described at length the USG's long-standing support for the Philippine Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and our hopes to provide significant additional funding this year as well as in subsequent years. He highlighted our strong partnership with the CHR in human rights vetting of all Philippine military and law enforcement officials who undergo USG-sponsored training. He also described our discussions with the Norwegians and EU Troika about possible practical forms of additional assistance, such as to the Witness Protection Program, which NSA Gonzalez strongly welcomed.

[1](#)4. (C) At the NICA briefing and at a separate meeting on February 28 with the new chief of the Philippine National Police's Task Force Usig, Pol/C described Embassy's

coordination over the past two years with the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Department of Justice, and the Supreme Court to draft a proposed Executive Order mandating police/prosecutor cooperation from the outset of a crime in order to ensure that eventual prosecutions have the solid basis needed to win convictions, not only in cases such as unlawful killings but also in cases involving terrorism, trafficking in persons, and other serious crimes. He noted that this draft grew from a successful model used by the Zamboanga City prosecutor to obtain convictions in TIP and terrorism cases, and urged that our Philippine interlocutors review this draft and coordinate with DILG, DOJ, and the Supreme Court to make sure that Malacanang make a decision quickly in order to give Philippine authorities additional tools in building successful cases against the culprits of the unlawful killings. Ambassador will also raise -- again -- with Executive Secretary Ermita on March 2.

15. (C) Ambassador on March 1 chaired an in-house Embassy inter-agency working group on unlawful killings to determine additional steps the Embassy team can undertake.

16. (C) Ambassador will meet with Melo Commission chairman retired Supreme Court Justice Melo on March 5 to seek his views on additional assistance. She will also discuss the issue of these killings and additional Philippine and USG responses with Defense Secretary Ebdane and Armed Forces chief General Esperon on March 3 during the Distinguished Visitors' Day for Balikatan 07 on Jolo Island. Separately, Pol/C will meet in the coming days with the head of the new Armed Forces of the Philippines' Human Rights Office, the executive director of the newly reconstituted Presidential Committee on Human Rights, and the chairman of the Commission on Human Rights to discuss further areas of cooperation and to reiterate U.S. concern. (Septel will report on visiting EAP/MTS Director Marciel's discussions on this issue with the Department of National Defense, the Philippine National

MANILA 00000683 002 OF 002

Police, and the Department of Foreign Affairs.)

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